

BERLIN,
March 3, 1919.

TO: Lieut.Col.E.W.Ryan

FROM: Captains B.J.Valdes and L.G.Patterson

SUBJECT: Inspection of Russian Prison Camp at Aschaffenburg

Location and General Appearance -

This camp is located on a plain about four miles west of Aschaffenburg, drained towards the west side of the camp, which slopes gently. The soil is sandy with open surface concrete drainage. It covers a surface of about two hectares. There are four barracks with a capacity of about 225 men each, a kitchen, observation hospital, main hospital, storehouse, library, bath house, offices and quarters for the German soldiers. The whole camp is surrounded by a high barbed-wire fence. Part of the camp was very clean and part with piles of rubbish and vegetable matter from the kitchen, and muddy from the rain of the previous night.

Camp Government - Military and Prison Personnel -

There are one captain, one lieutenant, two army doctors and forty men all of whom are Germans. Besides these there are one civilian interpreter and a committee composed of eight Russian prisoners. Of this committee two act as representatives of the prisoners to report their wants and camp conditions. Inside the grounds are 900 prisoners, and 800 in addition in commando, making a total of 1700. All these in commando are working on farms scattered over this region and are paid one mark a day. In appearance they are usually stolid and in many cases pale, although in a number of instances quite intelligent-looking. Their outer clothes and shoes are in fairly good condition, but underwear is very scarce and greatly needed.

Lazarett - Equipment -

There is an observation ward tolerably clean, containing eleven patients, all of whom are slight cases of grippe. The bunks were untidy and only two blankets were seen, the statement being made that no blankets were needed. There was one stove but with no fire. The main hospital was built of stone divided into four wards with a capacity of 60 beds, one bath room with two tubs with hot and cold water, an operating room, two toilet rooms with flushing tanks, and an excellent kitchen for the patients with a large range. This hospital was clean and neat in every particular. The patients were dressed in hospital clothes and were lying in bunks which were clean. There was sufficient bed clothing for each patient. There were 32 patients in the hospital suffering from grippe, bronchitis, pneumonia and malaria.

Three among these 32 were cases of chronic tuberculosis, which were separated in another ward. Several cases of grippe were complicated with empyema. There were no cases of venereal disease or trachoma. The following medical and food supplies are requested by the physician in charge: alcohol and methylated spirits, absorbent cotton, gauze, bandages, brandy, milk, coffee, tea, cocoa, sugar and biscuits and kettles for the kitchen. Convalescent patients only get 230 grams of bread per day, which is deemed insufficient.

Dietary and Supplies of Camp -

The kitchen is only fairly clean. Eight cauldrons are used for cooking the food, all of which, except bread is served in the form of soup. The cleaning and preparation of the vegetables is done by machinery, is completely in the hands of Russian personnel and is done with neither care nor cleanliness. The vegetables are either assorted badly or not assorted at all, their main object being quantity at the cost of quality. A bread ration of 230 grams per day cooked in the neighboring town is furnished. All fresh vegetables are scarce and there are no potatoes at all. The following is a sample ration for two days:

Wednesday, Feb. 26, 1919

Breakfast: Cocoa (imitation) 25 grams per person
Sugar 5 " " "

Dinner: Salt meat 50 "
Carrots 500 "
Cabbage 400 "
Dry vegetables
Mixed 20 "
Mixed Flour 20 "
Margarine 10 "

Supper: Mixed Flour 50 "
Carrots 300 "
Cabbage 300 "
Dry Vegetables 20 "
Margarine 5 "
Bread 230 " per day served in the evening.

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 1919 (Meatless Days Tuesday & Friday)

Breakfast: Mixed Flour 50 Grams
Levurine 10 "
Dry Vegetables 20 "
Margarine 5 "

Dinner: Beans 150 "
Carrots 500 "
Cabbage 500 "
Mixed Flour 20 "
Margarine 5 "

Supper:	Oatmeal	75	Grams.
	Flour	10	"
	Carrots	400	"
	Dry Vegetables	20	"
	Margarine	5	"

Sanitation and General Hygiene -

Water is good and piped from Aschoffenburg. Toilets are apparently clean but very ill-smelling. The excrement is hauled, when necessary, away from the camp. The barracks are dirty. The ticking and blankets are never changed, but sprinkled with powdered neftaline every fifteen days. The ventilation of the barracks is very poor. The clothing of prisoners has not been disinfected for almost a year on account of lack of coal to heat the disinfector, as coal is saved for the disinfection of the clothing of patients. Each barrack was heated by one stove and prisoners complained of cold. Prisoners wash their own clothes but have no soap. There is a bath house with 16 showers, undressing and dressing room and a large disinfector. The prisoners bathe once every three weeks only, on account of lack of coal.

Suggestions made by officer of the camp as to requirements.

Cooking lard, bread, meat, potatoes, macaroni, underwear and socks should be furnished at once.

General Impressions -

The prisoners are very anxious to return home, but we found no political propaganda. The German command seems desirous of making the prisoners as comfortable as their means will permit. There is some tendency among the prisoners to use a small reading room which is provided by the Germans, but all literature is carefully inspected by the interpreter in order to prevent any political propaganda reaching the prisoners.

In conclusion we were most courteously and cordially received by the officers of the camp and every assistance given us to obtain any information we desired. We enclose a paper handed to us by one of the prisoners, written in Russian, which he said was for the Allied Commission in Berlin. We also enclose the address of Dr. Friedleiss, who will be glad to receive the few supplies he has requested.